

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Upon detecting an incoming call, a call screening system determines the CALLER ID information associated with the call and compares it to a database of allowable calling parties. If the calling party is to be allowed to ring through, the call screening system routes the incoming call to one or more communication devices associated with the calling party information in the allowable calling party database. In this manner, certain screened calls only ring through to a handset if authorized, while others are authorized to ring through to a fax machine, an answering machine, another handset, or a remote device connected between a remote handset and the local exchange. A single call screening device having several ports thus filters calls to multiple communications devices. Incoming call screening may be selectively different during different times of the day, for different calling parties, or for different communications devices connected to the call screening device. The call screening device may thus switch between allowing all incoming calls to ring through except those specifically designated to be blocked and screening all incoming calls except those specifically designated to be permitted to ring through. One or more override codes entered in a touch-tone keypad by the calling party may permit an incoming call to ring through despite an active screening mode. The CALLER ID information is captured and retransmitted to the selected device once an incoming call has been passed through to a selected device.